Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* It is comparatively of recent construction. If it is there for all the time that this road has been here it will not be in the same condition.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Chittur-Tattamangalam):* Whatever it be, I request the Government to look into the matter and make that road as perfect as the importance of Nelliampathies deserves.

The subject is so important that the Government will do well to appoint an ad hoc committee to go into the details to make proposals.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* Sir, first of all allow me to thank the Hon'ble Member for Planters and others most sincerely for the kind sentiments expressed by them with regard to my work as an officer of the State.

Now with regard to the motion itself I may be permitted to explain that the Government is in full sympathy with the object of the cut motion. They are well aware that this particular area is well suited for plantations of hill produce like coffee, tea and cardamom and I may inform the House that the Government are prepared to give every encouragement in this direction. But what happened was that soon after the construction of this road when applications were invited for taking up these lands for plantation purposes economic depression set in. Immediately after the opening of this road, we published in the Government Gazette and advertised in the papers that these lands are available for being leased for plantation. There were a number of enquiries also. Unfortunately the depression camein and nothing fruitful happened. As pointed out by the Hon'ble Members this area is eminently suited for the cultivation of hill produce of the kind duly referred to. As the market for such produce improved, the war has come and then again the position became difficult. The two chief drawbacks as regards the extension of cultivation in this area are (1) its highly inclined nature and (2) the difficulty of getting labour. The difficulties of finding adequate and suitable labour here, as the House is aware, considerably increased, and I doubt if it is worth while to consider the question of further extension of plantation in the locality just now. In any case I can assure the Hon'ble Member that the Government is in full sympathy with the object of the motion and Government will do whatever is possible, as circumstances permit.

As regards the appointment of an expert Committee, I do not think, as the Hon'ble Member himself will admit, that there is any necessity for such a Committee. We all know that the area is well suited for the cultivation of forest produce. There is very little for a Committee to consider. The matter will receive the sympathetic consideration of the Government.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Representing a small interest in this House, as I do, I must be obliged to the whole house for the support they have given to an industry in which only a very few people are interested. I am also obliged to the very sympathetic words of the Hon'ble Conservator of Forests. Without taking any more time of the House I shall only point out a small fact. As regards labour so far as the Cardamom industry is concerned, the labour required is next to nothing. You do not disturb the surface of the soil. Therefore no annual digging is necessary, no manuring is done. As far as possible you should not disturb the surface of the soil. The only thing that is required is two 'sickle weedings' to use planting parlance. This is all that has to be done. Speaking about labour I would ask what are you going to do to solve the post-war problem of unemployment of a lakh and over of people who have joined the war and gone to Ceylon and Assam and who will be returning to the State? Mind you over 30,000 people are now employed in Assam and Ceylon alone. Therefore this is a most constructive plan which you can take up to solve a possible post-war problem. The planting industry, if developes, could absorb a lot of labourers. I therefore request the House to adopt this motion. Unless a recommendation is made it will not be in the papers of the Government for disposal.

Rama Varmha Tampuran *(Secretary to Government):* It will be in the papers, all right.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* The spirit of the motion is accepted, then why press it to a division?

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Then I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

CUT MOTION No 13

Tea plantation—extension of

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Sir, I beg to move *"To reduce the allotment of Rs. 4,051 for B. Salaries and Establishment by Re. 1."* The object of my motion is *to bring to the notice of the Government the need for getting licence for planting a greater area under tea in Cochin State.*

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As regards the tea industry what I have stated in general about the development of the Nelliampathis will apply. Therefore it is unnecessary to make a speech. I have only to say that there are thousands and thousands of acres fit for tea industry in the State. We are producing excellent tea here—I once sent samples to the Diwan and the Minister—*(A voice. Why not send us also?)* Allow me to develop a plantation. Everyone of you will then get a packet every year. There is plenty of land fit for tea cultivation in Cochin State. The position is this. There are only three tea estates now. Without going further into details I may say that we have only just about 2 thousand acres under tea. Well on a comparison you will find that in Travancore there is a far greater area under tea, one country alone having over 20 thousand acres. Mind you, an acre of tea is fetching Rs. 2,000. An acre of tea in the Nelliampathies, which is considered to be excellent, is yielding 700 and 1,000 lbs. of tea per annum selling now at about a rupee but once fetching Rs. 1—8—0. Selling at Re. 1 it brings you at least Rs. 700. After this comparison between Travancore and Cochin I will take you to what is being done in Ceylon. The position is this: There is an International tea Regulation Committee whose permit is required for planting tea. I always have been bringing to the notice of our government the necessity for getting new rights for planting tea. Represent before that committee that we want more planting right for tea. So far as rubber is concerned planting rights are now being freely given. So far as tea is concerned there is complete restriction. Please get us some planting right for tea. I will immediately show you what has been done in Ceylon.

In view of the present demand for tea, the international tea agreement has been renewed for the duration of the War. On acconnt of this renewal the International Tea Committee has decided to grant new planting rights for Ceylon. At present the area under Tea Cultivation in Ceylon is only 2,797 acres. Now it is to be increased to 15,803 acres. This is 13 thousand acres more. We have about 2,000 acres. Please get us at least 5,000 acres. Am I not now pressing the Government on a vital necessity? Will not the whole House support me? In the name of the people I am asking you to get his planting rights. The government should be urged. We must condemn the action of a government in not getting you, Mr. Panickar and my humble self and our children more planting rights. (A voice: Why do you mention the name of Mr. Panickar particularly? Because he knows the Highlands more than any of you.

Rao Sahib Dr. T. Verghese *(Chief Medical Officer):* Is there water there?

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* You ought to see that. Every crevice of rock is simply exuding water during the whole year.

Mr. V. K. Bhaskara Menon *(Cranganur):* Why are you anxious over it. You will never be asked to go there. You can sit commfortably here at Ernakulam.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Ceylon has got 13,000 acres more. Please get us at least 10,000 acres more and satisfy our aspirations. Why is this State existing? Therefore, Sir, as a censure upon the Government it is necessary to pass this motion.

The House rose at 1-30 p.m. and re-assembled after lunch at 2-30 p.m. with the Hon'ble Deputy President in the Chair.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* Sir, the mover of the cut motion wants to get rights for planting a greater area with tea in Cochin State. As the mover has already pointed out, this matter is in the hands of the International Tea Licensing Committee in which the Government of Cochin alone cannot do anything. I may say that whether the Government should move in the matter depends upon the demand from the interested parties for getting permission to grow tea in fresh areas. So far as I am aware no request for any licence for new planting of tea has been received. If and when any demand is received then we will certainly look into the question. This is then the first time that any representation has been made on the subject, as far as I know.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* My information is that there has been demands.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* It has not come to the notice of the Government. So far as I am aware no such request has ever come. Whenever any request is received it will be duly considered.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* There has been plenty of demands. As a recommendation to the Government I wish the motion may be put to vote.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon *(Conservator of Forests):* The Government do not oppose the motion and it has been stated that when any demand comes it will be considered. In the circumstances, I would suggest that there is no necessity to press this motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

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